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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

IN the present state of the world, the person who undertakes the view of the politics of States and Empires, has a task to perform repugnant to every generous and humane feeling. When he considers mankind, the sublime ends for which they were formed, the capabilities of their nature, and all the good placed so obviously in their view, and within their grasp, as to appear soliciting their enjoyment of it—he shudders to behold them indignantly spurning the bounties of heaven, turning its best gifts into weapons of defiance, and fiercer than

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the brindled tiger—seeming only anxious to embroe their hands in the blood of each other. We leave the disorders of private society to the legislator and the moralist, while the contentions of nations and the public conduct of statesmen pass under our review; unhappily these latter burst with impunity the bonds of morality and legislation, while no powerful executive is found to visit their breach upon the guilty.

The clouds which appeared to lower during our last month's notice have now burst, and the shock has

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been extensively felt. The two by the greatest nations on the Continent of Europe have commenced their *final* struggle, and mankind are agitated with hopes and fears commensurate to the importance which they attach to the termination of the contest.

Spain, Portugal, Sweden, are nearly lost sight of; their affairs are of smaller interest, and must take their direction according to the superior movement.

The immediate causes of the present war betwixt France and Austria seem involved in very convenient obscurity. The advocates on either side have the advantage of appropriating to themselves all the justice, and to their adversary all the turpitude and offence that can aggravate the most wanton aggression. The Austrian government is accused of ingratitude, of violating the oath of friendship made by the Emperor Francis to Bonaparte, when the latter crowned with victory held the destiny of Francis in his hands, and his breath could turn the balance in which empire and annihilation were suspended; of being partial to England and English *gold*, of secretly abetting the Spanish cause while publicly professing friendship to France, and of anxiously awaiting any embarrassment of the latter in order to renew hostility with more than former effect. On the other hand, the ministers of Francis exclaim loudly against the tyranny of Bonaparte to the powers of the Continent, especially the Germanic States, and that troublesome jealousy which will not permit an increase of their army without demanding explanation. In this apparent uncertainty, prudence might require silence; but as impartial spectators, as lovers of our country, we cannot help deploring a renewal of the system which has so often proved fatal to the allies of England, and injurious to her cause, and fortunate only for that man and country we have spent so much blood and treasure in vainly endeavouring to humble. The declarations of Austria, and the assertions of our own ministry, cannot weaken our opinion, that the two governments had come to a perfect understanding, before the former ventured to give Bonaparte cause of distrust

the distribution and increase of her army. The circumstance of Austria drawing bills to a large amount on the English treasury, Mr. Percival says indeed without advice, to enable her to commence the campaign, is only a corroboration of this opinion; and the easy confidence with which it was introduced in the House of Commons, shows that ministers were not taken unawares, but rather disappointed that she had not made a larger demand, and thereby given promise of a longer contest. The hostility of Austria seems to have been long meditated; but as in the case of Prussia, the indecision of weakness and fear lost the favourable moment, and now the rashness of despair from the same cause, urges her to certain destruction. We need not conceal that we think the probabilities are all against her; and that should she be eventually saved, it must be by causes at present as unforeseen and unexpected, as was little more than a year ago, that evanescent flash of patriotism which appeared in Spain to console the friends of freedom—and then left them confounded by its meteoric existence.

The first hostilities began on the part of Austria, about the 10th or 11th of April, by their troops passing the Inn and compelling the Bavarians to fall back; at the same time a proclamation was issued by the Arch-Duke Charles, announcing the step he had taken, his determination to treat as enemies all who should attempt to oppose him, and inviting the king of Bavaria to place himself under the protection of the Austrian army. His Majesty of Bavaria not liking this mode of invitation, left his capital for Augsburg where the French were in considerable force; the Austrians soon after entered Munich, and possessed themselves of nearly all Bavaria, almost without opposition. On the 19th April we may say the Campaign really commenced at Pfaffenhofen and Tann, near Augsburg, where General Oudinot and the Dukes of Auerstadt (Davoust) and Dantzic (Lefebvre) attacked and defeated the Austrians, and took 11 or 12 hundred prisoners. At Abens-

berg on the 20th, Bonaparte at the head of the Bavarian troops, under General Wrede, and those of Wertheimberg, commanded by General Vandamme, attacked the Arch-Duke Lewis, and General Hiller, whose corps was 60,000 strong, beat it and took 18,000 prisoners with a number of standards and cannon. The Prince Royal of Bavaria was in this battle, as were also the Dukes of Dantzic, and Montebello, (Lefebvre and Lasnes.)

The next day, the 21st. the French advanced against Landshut, before which city the Austrians were again defeated with the loss of 9,000 men, 30 pieces of cannon and a number of caissons and baggage waggons.

During these transactions the Arch-Duke Charles had come from Bohemia towards Ratisbon, which place he obliged to surrender and took 1,000 prisoners; he then proceeded into Bavaria with the view of putting a stop to the rapid progress of the French, and was at Echnühl on the 22d. with 110,000 men; on the evening of which day he was attacked by Bonaparte, having under his orders the Dukes of Montebello, Auerstadt and Dantzic (Lasnes, Davoust and Lefebvre) when the Austrians sustained another defeat with the loss of great part of their artillery, many standards, and 20,000 made prisoners. The Arch Duke retreated upon Ratisbon where another engagement took place the next day, the 23d. the event of which was equally unfortunate; he was compelled to recross the Danube and retire into Bohemia, while Ratisbon with 8,000 prisoners fell into the hands of the French. During the engagement this day, General Count Bellegarde's corps arrived on the field of battle, but does not appear to have taken a part, or had any effect unless perhaps facilitating the retreat of the Arch-Duke.

Bonaparte's head-quarters were at Ratisbon the 24th. from whence he sent his troops in different directions, as if to scour a country where no very formidable opposition was apprehended. On that day the Duke of Rivoli (Massena) marched from Ratisbon with his corps for Passau, on the Inn, where he arrived the 26th a distance of 50 miles in two days, through a

country which a week before had been in the entire possession of the Austrians. The French head-quarters were transferred successively to Muhlendorff, Burghausen, Braunau on the Inn, and Ried still farther on the main road to Vienna, on the southern side of the Danube; at which last place they continued on the 2d. instant.

In Italy the Austrian army under the Arch-Duke John seems to have been successful in the first attack, having driven back the Italian army commanded by the Viceroy (Eugene Beauharnois) in person. The Tyrolese also are said to have risen and expelled the French and Bavarians from the whole of their territory. Later accounts state that the Austrians have been compelled to retire to the Tagliamento with loss; and that the French have re-entered the Tyrol.

In Poland the Arch-Duke Ferdinand, with the division under his command, entered the Duchy of Warsaw about the 19th April, and took the Capital of the same name without opposition. There were some rumours of a battle having previously taken place, but we have not been able to arrive at any authentic information.

We may now pause, and consider the sketch we have just given of those proceedings of the Belligerents which have already reached us. And here we can see nothing to distinguish the present, from the two last campaigns in Germany: the same rapid progress of the French armies, the same inability in her enemies to stem the impetuous torrent; even the consummate abilities of Moreau sometimes allowed the friends of Austria time to indulge a hope of their success, but the eagles of Bonaparte bear down these ill-fated combatants with a violence that often out-strips the worst apprehensions concerning them. The aim of Bonaparte seems in the first instance to be the possession of Vienna, which nothing can long save now but the Arch-Duke Charles risking another general engagement. At the end of April he was still retiring farther into Bohemia, while the Prince of Ponte Corvo (Bernadotte) with the Saxon auxiliaries, was advancing from the North of Germany, towards the theatre of war, by Egra,

which is somewhat in the Arch-Duke's rear. The possession of the Capital, besides the intrinsic advantages arising from its situation and the large supplies of stores collected there, will be still more favourable to the French cause by dispiriting the Austrian army, as was very observable last war at the battle of Austerlitz.

The Archduke Charles seems to have committed a capital error, by advancing so incautiously against the French army. After the capture of Ratisbon, instead of crossing the Danube, had he taken a strong position in the northern side of that river, he would have kept the enemy in check, given time to the beaten divisions of his own army to retire with some kind of order, and either join himself or act again as circumstances might require; but his over anxiety to stop the progress of the French, and give assistance to his brother and the other generals in Bavaria, who he might suppose were over-powered by superior numbers, led him to risk a general engagement, the unfortunate termination of which will probably, exclusive of the immediate consequences of defeat, have an unfavourable influence on the whole campaign. Delay must have been most advantageous to him, and proportionally detrimental to the intentions of Bonaparte.

The latest accounts announce the entrance of Bonaparte into Vienna on the 10th instant, without having experienced any further opposition; that the Archduke Charles was proceeding from Bohemia towards the Austrian frontier, and that the Emperor Francis had gone to the Archduke's head quarters.

According to Bonaparte's usual policy, he is again apparently leaving the Spanish peninsula to its fate, until he accomplishes an object which he considers of far greater importance. Were the Spanish people really animated with that vital spark which we have heard so much of, but whose effects have hitherto been so unoperative, now would be the time by a universal effort to deliver themselves entirely from French domination. We think that if proper measures were adopted the people might still be roused to a sense of their degradation. Were objects placed before them which are known to have a mighty influence on mankind; were advantages brought to

bear on their feelings, sufficient to stir the latent spark of manhood in their bosoms, and warm them into men, we might still have hope of their cause; and Englishmen, who proudly boast of their constitution, might have the honour of emancipating a nation worthy of a better lot than they have long been destined to endure.

A free people in Spain and Portugal would be an effectual counterpoise to the extending influence of Bonaparte on the Continent. And surely the most unbounded liberty enjoyed by these two nations could not be more formidable to *us* than the whole population of Europe directed against our prosperity, our existence; and wielded by this most dexterous and inveterate adversary. If late accounts can be relied on, the state of affairs in those countries is more favourable than we had any right so soon to expect. The French, spread over a large extent of country, are unable to co-operate or support each other, and although the Spanish and Portuguese troops by themselves would be of little account, yet they serve to occupy attention, and we have a large force again in Portugal, under an officer, brave, skilful and enterprising. Sir Arthur Wellesley, we venture to predict, will not compromise the honour of his country, nor tarnish its ancient military fame; and whatever may be the issue of the *present* expedition, we shall not have to deplore a lack of national honour at its termination. Should the Austrian war be considerably protracted, and continue serious enough to occupy Bonaparte's attention, his brother may again be compelled to take shelter beyond the Ebro; but unless the inhabitants of these countries, unless the Spaniards and Portuguese are *themselves* willing to be free, and not merely defended and protected by foreign arms, he will easily and at his leisure wrest back from us the prize won at such expense and hazard. Intelligence is received of Sir Arthur Wellesley having re-taken Oporto the 12th of May, after three smart actions with Marshal Soult, in which the latter was defeated each time, and obliged to retreat to Amarante in disorder, leaving great part of his artillery and stores behind him.

In the absence of information that

can be relied on, reports are industriously circulated of the partiality of Russia to the Austrian cause; but the emperor Alexander's interests are too dependent on his connection with France to allow these rumours an easy credit. Austria from its situation must be a greater object of jealousy to the Russian court than Bonaparte, and without the consent, and perhaps assistance of the latter, the views which this court is known to have long entertained with respect to Turkey, could never be even partially gratified. As to habits of friendship—Alexander's late conduct to the unfortunate Frederick, must ever banish the idea of his being influenced by so slender a tie. We see nothing then, which can give any hope of co-operation on the side of Russia.—Turkey indeed, is said to have declared war against this latter power; but surely it is not necessary now to enter on a description of that once mighty empire, to demonstrate the insignificance of any diversion she can make in our favour—Turkey and Austria, against Russia and France, is a volume on the subject. We hear that Russia declared war against Austria on the 25th of April, that the Russian army afterwards entered Galicia in Poland, and gained a victory over the Austrians.

Since the revolution in Sweden the affairs of that country seem to have been conducted with singular prudence and moderation. If the king has any friends, or the late government any partisans, their number must be inconsiderable; for their voice is not heard to disturb the general satisfaction. The measure of assembling the states of the kingdom was a dictate of sound political wisdom; it has diffused joy through all ranks, and given them an assurance in which they seem to rest with confidence, that their grievances shall be redressed. When their ancient form of government is restored, and the people, by representatives freely chosen, recover their due weight and influence, no desolating interminable wars will be carried on without end or object; nor the very independence of the country endangered to gratify the caprice and ambition of a few

leading individuals. When they shall be completely freed from that dreadful scourge, a war of personal motives, contrary to the national interests, they will then have time to consider their domestic policy; and by improving those sources of wealth and comfort which are not stinted to any soil or climate, Sweden may yet enjoy more real happiness than she has found since the splendid era of the great Gustavus. We fear, however, that the weakness of the late king has irrecoverably lost to Sweden a large portion of her territory, and that she will not be able to purchase safety but by assuming a hostile aspect toward us, who are considered by the two leading powers as the fomenters of all discord on the Continent of Europe.

The Duke of Sudermania has now occasion for all his prudence and experience. His speech at the opening of the Diet augurs favourably; it breathes a spirit of moderation and love of country, which shows the virtuous and enlightened Prince looking for happiness in the happiness of those entrusted to his care.

The relations of peace and amity according to present appearances, will speedily be re-established among the northern nations; and the Baltic be as closely shut against our commerce, as it is for a considerable part of the year by the hand of nature herself. On the 10th of May the States of Sweden, united in one assembly, unanimously passed a declaratory act, "that, Gustavus IV. and his issue are now, and for ever, deprived of the crown and government of Sweden."

Denmark seems anxious to consider Sweden again as a friendly power: her irritated feelings towards the late government of the latter for unmanly exultation over her in the hour of national calamity, it is not possible for justice and candour to condemn. Our national good faith was wantonly sacrificed on that occasion, for a paltry consideration; and what did we gain? that which in open warfare we might have gotten at half the expense, and in place of ancient friendship, a rancorous hostility, which ages of moderation will hardly be sufficient

to appease. Would that this act were blotted from the records of our country, and that we could no longer be branded as the violators of the most sacred rights of independent nations!

Without means of accurate information as to the measures pursued or contemplated by America, and kept equally uninformed by our Ministry of the progress made in any negotiations they may be carrying on with her, what we say on that subject must chiefly be matter of surmise; and we do not like to wander too far in the region of conjecture.

The American government seems disappointed that the embargo produced no greater or more immediate effect on those powers, against which its operation was principally directed. Congress met under the influence of feelings arising from this disappointment, and thinking that the many evasions of the embargo which had taken place was the occasion, they proceeded to enact other laws to the same purpose, guarded by stronger sanctions. This was hardship enough to a people unused to the restriction of penal statutes, and being artfully and assiduously represented as unconstitutional by the Federal party, it was opposed with such violence, that congress had to give way, and almost immediately repeal their enactment.

The embargo was superseded on the 20th instant by a non-intercourse act, with the provisions of which we are not perfectly acquainted, but by late accounts they seem to have been enforced with such strictness, that several ships ready to sail were obliged to re-land their cargoes.

Congress closed their late session equally unsatisfactorily to themselves and their constituents; and that which meets in the present month will be placed in an arduous situation, and will require more than ordinary wisdom and circumspection to conduct their deliberations to a happy issue.

Looking at America as spectators, we thought the embargo a wise measure at the time, and likely to produce the good they expected from it, which was, a temperate and forbearing conduct from France and England; and we still think it would have had this effect,

had it been strictly observed. Its pressure, however, on themselves, was peculiarly severe; accumulating crops, unproductive capital, and many thousands of formerly useful citizens—and the principal means of enriching the state, now supported by public bounty; considering these things, we need not wonder at the embarrassment of the legislature, fluctuating between private distress and the public honour of their country. If, in this trying situation they yielded the latter to the former, however great and imperative the call, we may respect their motives, but cannot confer the praise of firmness upon their conduct. The government and inhabitants of a country, individually and collectively, should submit to every personal privation and sacrifice, rather than the imputation of dishonour should attach to their name. We trust that our government will not renew this subject, nor again force upon them the necessity of self-denying plans; but as a relaxation has lately taken place in some of our most obnoxious measures, that this will be followed by their total repeal, and such a system of conciliation adopted, as will ensure peace with America, while we are likely to have war with all the rest of the world.

ENGLAND.

Let us now turn our attention from the Continent, that scene of ill digested, and ill concerted plans on the one hand, and that mighty concentration of military force on the other, which is founded on the code of conscription, that vast iron screw, directed by the powerful energies of the autocrat, who, like his prototype Cæsar, appears to be actuated by the powerful principle alluded to by the Poet, "a soldier's shame, untaught to yield,
Which blush'd for nothing but an ill fought field."

and proceed to take a view of our domestic situation.

The discussions which took place in the house of commons, on the conduct of the Duke of York, appear to have roused the latent energies of the British public, beyond what a short time ago seemed probable. When the business was brought forward, the ministerial party in the

house openly espoused the Duke's cause. The members of the former administration, the drilled ranks of opposition, kept aloof, and cautiously avoided committing themselves so as to make their return to power hereafter more difficult, or to tie up their own hands from corruption, if they should again become ministers. The *intermitting* Sheridan openly declared himself, and adopting the ministerial phrase, declaimed against the conspiracy to disgrace the illustrious house of Brunswick. Grattan and Ponsonby did not form a part of the honourable minority, who supported Wardle's motion, though on some of the qualifying, and accommodating motions, which succeeded, they voted against the minister. The names of Wardle, Burdett, Folkstone, Whitbread, and Romilly, stand pre-eminently conspicuous, as advocates of the *party of the people*. Among the thirty members who voted for Lord Folkstone's motion for general inquiry, we do not find the name of one leading member of the late administration. Conscience which makes so many cowards, probably whispered, that some tales might be unfolded, to prove that corrupt practises were not the exclusive property either of the ins or the outs. We recollect "the patriot's cloak," and "the dropping guinea from the crack'd bag—"

"Which jingling down the back stairs
told the crew,
Old Cato is as great a rogue as you."

The proceedings of parliament were viewed with much interest by the people, and a burst of popular enthusiasm broke forth, which, that it may do good, we have only to wish may be permanent. The conduct of parliament was not such as to raise it in popular estimation. Lord Castlereagh, whose conduct was alluded to in our last retrospect, was acquitted by a majority of 216 to 167, although it clearly appeared that while he was a secretary of state, and president of the board of controul for India affairs, he used his influence in the latter capacity, to begin a bargain for trafficking for a seat in parliament for lord Cloncarty, one of his friends, by offering to give a writership in the East India company's service. He

was principally defended on the ground of the bargain not having been completed, although no reluctance appeared on his part, *as servant of the people*, to dispose of the writership to promote parliamentary influence. In private life, a servant who attempted to betray his trust, would be discharged, though from the business not being completed, sufficient grounds for a criminal prosecution might not exist.

The house of commons have since passed a vote of censure on inferior criminals, the commissioners for taking care of Dutch property brought into Great Britain, when Holland in 1795 fell under the influence of France.—These commissioners retained large sums in their hands and applied the interest to their own emolument, while they also appropriated a commission of 5 per cent to themselves. It is worthy of notice that among these commissioners is the famous John Bowles, who was not disposed to serve his country for nought. He was one of the trio who edited the *Antijacobin Review*; they were George Canning, John Bowles, and the no less celebrated Hookham Frere, the redoubtable military instructor, who lately opposed himself to the prudent counsels of the lamented Sir John Moore in Spain. Bowles is a member of the society for the suppression of vice, the champion of religion and social order, against the horrors of that monster Jacobinism, which so long under the direction of the magician Pitt, frightened the good people of England, and made them so ready to identify abuses with the constitution. But let us hope that these days are past, and that the hypocrisy and interested motives of such defenders as the canting Bowles are unmasked. May a similar fate attend all those, who under the semblance of virtue are the supporters of vice!

A large body of the people have their thoughts now turned to parliamentary reform, from the conviction that the old trade of corruption must continue, if an efficient check, by means of a radical reform, is not put to it. They have seen the strugglers for political power, succeed each other in office, and forget the promises they

made while in opposition. Indeed while the present system of barter and sale continues, nothing better can be expected. To have a virtuous administration, there must be a virtuous parliament, and a virtuous people can alone constitute a virtuous parliament. Let us not be too hasty in throwing the blame off ourselves. If the electors are venal, and give their votes on interested motives, the representative may be expected to sell his vote, as he purchased his seat. If representatives must be paid for their support of ministers, either by places for themselves or their connections, or in some of the thousand ways, "which lend corruption lighter wings to fly," ministers must gratify them, or give place to less scrupulous successors. Through all the ramifications of society, the progress of corruption must be stopped. Even in private life, we see much of it. The expectants of places for themselves, or their relatives are numerous in the Church, the law, the army, the navy, and the revenue: and all these, unless in the instances, which it is hoped may be numerous, wherein virtuous principle counteracts selfish motives, are advocates for the continuance of corrupt influence. To assist in the cure of these complicated evils, a parliamentary reform is recommended by the most skilful state physicians: but to be effectual it must combine a scheme to lessen the price of his vote, and the cost of his seat to the representative, both which ends might probably to a certain degree be effected, by shortening the duration of parliaments, if to these measures further regulations were superadded.

For a view of the state of our present representation, we refer to the official documents, given at the end of this retrospect, for the resolutions entered into at the meeting of the freeholders of Hampshire, who not content with giving *empty thanks*, to the virtuous minority of 125, who supported Wardle,* pointed out, a remedy in

reform, for the glaring evils which he brought before the public, as well as for all others in which the practice differs from the theory of the constitution. We likewise subjoin, and earnestly recommend to the perusal of our readers, the resolutions of the friends of reform held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in Westminster, on the 1st. instant, resolutions which at once are firm and temperate. The old stale objection that this is not the time for reform, is revived. But in the vocabulary of courtiers and courtly adherents, the portentous word, reform is not admitted. In peaceable times we are told to let things remain as they are, and in stormy seasons we are desired not to increase the dangers of the tempest; and thus the old fabrick of the constitution is not to be touched, either to prepare against the storm, or to use precautions to secure its stability, when the storm rages.

In consequence of the system to expose abuses, Mr. Madocks in the House of Commons brought a charge against Lord Castlereagh and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for corrupt practises in regard to seats in parliament: as to the former for actual interference, and against the latter for participating in the knowledge of the transaction. Among other cases alluded to, the instance of the borough of Cashel was particularly specified. It appears that through the agency of Lord Castlereagh a seat in this borough had been sold to Quintin Dick, esq. but when it was known that in the late investigation his vote would be against an acquittal, a kind of intimation or hint was given that he should vacate his seat, which he accordingly did. The complaint was two fold, against ministers interfering in the elections of members of parliament, and acting as wholesale traffickers, and monopolizers in boroughs; and, secondly, for attempting to coerce the vote of a member. Quintin Dick has since declared by letter, that Lord Castlereagh did not desire him to vacate his seat. Pro-

*It is reported that to *female patriotism* we are indebted in part for the successful exertions of this intrepid opposer of corruption. Mrs. Wardle, it is said, sedulously employed herself in examining

papers and preparing notes for her husband, to assist him in his arduous labours.

bably the order did not come personally from him, but if there were no grounds for the charges, the way to refute it was obvious, by entering into the examination. Both sides of the house *coalesced* in negativing the inquiry, the numbers being 85 for the motion to examine, and 310 against it. The old opposition members with entire consistency voted against inquiring into conduct, which their own practice had sanctioned. The party for *the people* stood alone and unsupported, by either of the old contending parties.

In the present state of public opinion, the house of Commons, and the people do not act in unison. It remains to be seen whether the present burst of enthusiasm will be permanent or only as in other cases the fashion of the day. If the people act only from the impulse of the moment, or suffer themselves to be betrayed into intemperate conduct or expressions, the effervescence will probably subside into apathy but the expression of the public will declared with perseverance, firmness and coolness cannot fail, in time, of producing the most salutary effects, in promoting a real and radical reform. Two bills are now before the House of Commons, the one introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to prevent the sale of places, and the other by Mr. Curwen to prevent the purchase of seats in parliament. How far these bills will be made effective so as to answer their titles we must leave till we see them fully completed, and passed into laws: during which process they may yet undergo several alterations. It does not appear likely that the latter will be suffered to arrive at maturity, or if carried, would materially remove the evil.

That veteran in Reform, Christopher Wyvill, a clergyman of the church of England, who as chairman of the committee of the county of York, so ably advocated the cause of reform in the period previous to 1783 and 1784, when Reform was in fashion, and when Pitt was ranked among the reformers, but who did not join in the apostacy which succeeded, is now in his advancing years zealously engaged in a plan to

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promote religious liberty. He, in conjunction with a number of others, all of whom, with the exception of Dr. Disney, are members of the church of England, have a petition to parliament prepared to be presented during the present session, in which, embracing religious liberty in the most comprehensive sense, they pray that all political distinctions on account of religious opinions may cease, and all penal laws, whether affecting Catholics, or the several denominations of Protestant dissenters, and others, may be repealed. Let us hail the commencement of such a truly enlightened and liberal policy, as the abolition of political distinctions on account of opinions on the subject of religion. It may not receive its consummation for years to come—but when a beginning is made, let us trust to so just a sentiment gaining its way in time. The friends to progressive improvement receive consolation and encouragement from the final issue, after years of unsuccessful efforts, of the abolition of the African slave trade.

“Great is truth, and it will prevail.”

The ninth Report of the Commissioners of Military Inquiry has been lately published, in which the army expenditure in the West Indies is the subject of investigation. Great frauds appear, and a Commissary-general is charged, “with having very early framed and established, by means of combinations and intricacies almost impervious, an over-ruling and highly injurious influence over the whole transactions of the public, connected with the pay, and enormous expenditures of the army in this part of the world.” Some unfair transactions relating to the purchases of rum, wine, and flour, and also respecting the rates of exchange, being from 5 to 25 per cent beyond the prices at which the bills were credited to the public, are detailed, but which it would exceed our bounds to specify more particularly. This business has since undergone investigation in the courts of law. We sincerely hope that substantial justice may be done on all peculators, who, like leeches, have been long fastening on the vital strength of D d d

these countries, but who, from the frequency of such crimes, and from the multitudes to keep each other in countenance, are not sufficiently held in deserved detestation.

SCOTLAND.

We have not hitherto, in the course of our political labours, alluded especially to this country. But we gladly embrace the opportunity of making the first mention of this our near neighbour, to relate an instance of public spirit in her sons. Many of the inhabitants of the town of Glasgow, who have been long remarkable for their public spirit, wished to manifest, by a public act, their approbation of the conduct of Colonel Wardle, and were among the foremost in Great Britain in expressing this sentiment. A respectful application was made to the Lord Provost for his permission and consent, to call a meeting of the inhabitants; he refused to comply in very direct terms, though in a polite and gentleman-like manner. Respect for the authority and deference to the opinion of the chief magistrate induced the gentlemen who had interested themselves in this proposal, to abandon the idea of a public meeting. They resolved on opening places for receiving signatures to an address to that independent member of parliament. They had fresh difficulties to encounter, for the editors of the Glasgow newspapers refused admission to the advertisement, giving notice of the places where the address was left to receive signatures. The payment of advertising was offered, and the editor of the Glasgow Courier took payment, but on the next day returned the money, intimating he was not at liberty to publish it. Such conduct of the editors of newspapers, so repugnant to the principles of freedom, and so destructive to the liberty of the press, excited disgust in a numerous class of their readers. One of them, the editor of the Herald, thought proper to apologize, but in terms which advanced principles as arbitrary as any contained in the most abject and servile parts of the Napoleon code. It is much to be regretted that the editors of newspapers in many places do not act more impartially, but have their views so much turned to court the favour of the few, so as to neglect the interests

of the many, by whom they are supported. The committee say "they trust, however, that some public-spirited individuals will soon attempt to establish a newspaper in that city, which shall give a faithful narrative of the great events, and important proceedings which at this portentous period are occupying the public attention, whose columns shall be open to every species of liberal and candid discussion, consistent with the principles of the constitution. A free press is the safe-guard of our rights, and if this palladium shall ever become servile and venal, the sources of political information will soon be polluted, the people's minds poisoned, the constitution trampled on, and the country ruined." To such sound doctrine we cordially subscribe.

Among the official documents will be found the address, and advertisements, as also the letter to Colonel Wardle and his answer. The address, notwithstanding all opposition, received the signature of upwards of 4000 subscribers. The inhabitants of Paisley and its suburbs, amounting to upwards of 4,400 have likewise thanked G. L. Wardle, esq. Lord Folkstone, Sir Francis Burdett and Samuel Whitbread, esq. and the other independent members who supported the question, as entitled to a just tribute of national gratitude, for the noble instance of zeal which they displayed in the face of no common opposition, and which it is hoped is only an earnest of the advantages to be derived from the combined efforts of the 125 honourable and independent representatives, who stood forward to stem the torrent of corruption.

In 1793 by the banishment of Muir and Palmer and others, Scotland was put down by the strong hand of power, while alarm and terror succeeded. But Scotland was only sleeping. Now that she is awaked, she is found not to have been completely paralytic, but suffering only under a temporary torpor.

IRELAND.

The hopes entertained of the meeting at Belfast have not been realised. Immediately on opening the meeting, an attempt was made to prevent any thing being done; but it was over-ruled. A coldly polite address was then voted to

Gwyllim Lloyd Wardle, esq. and, without specifying any by name, to every other member of the House of Commons who supported him, or voted with him. Such is the state of public spirit in the populous and opulent town of Belfast, that many despaired of any measure tending more effectually to promote reform being carried. Yet we cannot but regret that some possessing public spirit, or *civil courage*, a virtue so necessary and so rare, did not step forward with a resolution in favour of a cure for the evils which were admitted to exist: as we believe that many in that town sincerely wish well to the cause of reform, and "the progress of public opinion."

The inhabitants of Keady and its vicinity, in the county of Armagh, have returned thanks to G. L. Wardle, esq. and presented him with a piece of Irish linen, in token of their gratitude and real esteem. They have likewise voted thanks to Jas. Craig, esq. the representative for Carrickfergus, as forming an *honourable exception* to many of our Irish members, we believe to all our northern ones, by appearing in the minority of 125. We refer our readers to page 403 for their resolutions.

The county of Cavan has also published a vote of thanks to Mr. Wardle and his coadjutors. A protest against those proceedings has been signed by some of the freeholders of that county. Henry Parnell, esq. brought forward on the 19th instant in the house of commons a motion for leave to bring in a bill to allow the clergy of Ireland to grant leases of tithes to their parishioners, for a term not exceeding twenty-one years; By this plan he intended to insure the land-holder against the uncertainty of the present mode of levying tythes, and to secure him against the evasions by which leases during incumbency are broken. He was supported by several of our Irish members, and opposed by some others: but the negative of the minister prevailed, and the motion was got rid of by the previous question being carried by a majority of 137 to 62. A wise government concedes to the wishes of the people; but in the opinion of some, not a stone of the old building, however misshapen or tottering it may appear, must be touch-

ed, lest more should be brought down with it. A greater grievance does not exist in Ireland than the present system of tything. The people suffer, and in many instances the situation of the clergy is not comfortable.

On the 24th inst. the Catholics had a meeting in Dublin, the Earl of Fingall in the chair, to consider of the propriety of petitioning Parliament. At this meeting, some diversity of opinion prevailed. We hail it as a favourable omen. It is pleasant to see free discussion liberally exercised, and the rights of private judgment displayed in matters which interest so numerous a class of our fellow-citizens, and by which a genuine spirit of liberty is kept alive among them.

A proposal was made to address parliament: but considering the advanced period of the session, an amendment was proposed, that the petition should be prepared to be presented at the early part of the next: and in the mean time notice be given in parliament of such intention. This plan was at length adopted, after the following resolutions had been carried by a majority.

Resolved. We, the Catholics of Ireland, have made repeated petitions for the relief of our grievances.—The greatest and wisest of men, both in and out of parliament, both in and out of office, were decidedly in favour of the expediency and justice of our claims; and they further insisted, that it was necessary to the very existence of the empire, to interest in its defence a population of from four to five millions of Catholics, constituting more than a fourth of the United Kingdom. We are now unhappily and experimentally convinced, that no principle of justice, no force of reasoning, is sufficient to counteract a malignant influence which threatens the empire with general contamination, and consequent destruction. Public delinquents and defaulters would put to hazard the existence of the reigning family, and the integrity of the empire, rather than restore the people to the privileges of the constitution, which would produce such wholesome reform of abuses, as must deprive themselves of the opportunity of undue influence and speculation. Under these discouraging circumstances, without hope of success at present, we are unwilling to agitate our claims by petitions to Parliament, feeling that rejection might increase the discontent already existing in our body: and

we cannot be indifferent to the pernicious effect of acquainting authentically, through the debates of the British parliament, our potent and too successful enemy, with the internal divisions and corruptions of the state, in the only powerful nation not yet subject to his controul."

It is highly gratifying to our feelings to express our conviction, that the question of Catholic emancipation has made considerable way in England during the last two years. We think we had pleasing evidence of this progress in public opinion during the discussions which took place last year in parliament, on the Catholic petition. The greater part of the literary class, espouse the cause of emancipation; among whom the Edinburgh and Monthly Reviewers take a conspicuous place: the lively Letters of Peter Plymley are said to have passed an eleventh edition. It is to the honour of literature that it tends to expand the heart, and is favourable to the cause of liberality. We fondly hope that in Great Britain the, "No popery cry," is silent to be heard again no more, and that some who were active in promoting it, like men recovering from a paroxysm of passion, are ashamed of their conduct. May our Irish brethren of all denominations forget their former animosities, fostered more by political distinctions, and differences rather from their relative situations, than from dissensions arising from the nature of opposite creeds. There is at present more of civil disunion, than of religious contest among us, though the former is allowed to be the effect of the latter, in more distant periods. It is a prevailing sentiment to allow to each other the liberty to form our own opinions on matters of religion. Why then should we perpetuate the distinctions which formerly arose from the narrow and contracted plan of acting? The rights of private judgment when we do no injury to our neighbour, and leave him unmolested also in his rights should be sacred, and free as the light of heaven.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

From the London Gazette, Saturday, April 29.

At the Court at the Queen's Palace,

the 26th of April, 1809, present, the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

Whereas his Majesty, by his Order in Council of the 11th November, 1807, was pleased, for the reasons assigned therein, to order, that "all the ports and places of France and her allies, or of any other country at war with his Majesty, and all other ports or places in Europe, from which although not at war with his Majesty, the British flag is excluded, and all ports or places in the colonies belonging to his Majesty's enemies, should from thenceforth be subject to the same restrictions, in point of trade and navigation, as if the same were actually blockaded in the most strict and rigorous manner;" and also to prohibit "all trade in articles which are the produce or manufacture of the said countries or colonies;" and whereas his Majesty having been nevertheless desirous not to subject those colonies which were in alliance or amity, to any greater inconvenience than was absolutely inseparable from carrying into effect his Majesty's just determination to counteract the designs of his enemies, did make certain exceptions and modifications expressed in the said Order of the 11th of November, and in certain subsequent Orders of the 25th of November, declaratory of the aforesaid Order of the 11th of November and the 13th of December, 1801, and the 30th of March, 1808.

And whereas, in consequence of divers events which have taken place since the date of the first-mentioned Order affecting the relation between Great Britain and the territories of other powers, it is expedient, that sundry parts and provisions of the said Orders should be altered or revoked:

His Majesty is therefore pleased, by and with the advice of his Privy Council, to revoke and annul the said several Orders, except as herein after expressed, and so much of the said several Orders, except as aforesaid, is hereby revoked accordingly.

And his Majesty is pleased, by and with the advice of his Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that all the ports and places, as far north as the river Ems inclusively, under the government styling itself the kingdom of Holland, and all ports and places under the government of France, together with the colonies, plantations and settlements in the possession of those governments respectively, and all ports and places in the northern parts of Italy, to be reckoned from the ports of Orhitello and Pesaro inclusively, shall continue and